

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7373
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
RUSNAAA USCINCEUR VAIHEGN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2628

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, SS, MO, AG
SUBJ: VISIT BY US JOURNALIST TO WESTERN SAHARA

1. ON OCTOBER 4, JACK KRAMER, A FREELANCE JOURNALIST CURRENTLY
EMPLOYED BY CHASE MANHATTAN BANK, TOLD US ABOUT HIS LATE SEPTEMBER,
EARLY OCTOBER TRAVELS WITH THE POLISARIO IN WESTERN SAHARA AND
ENVIRONS. TRIP WAS ARRANGED BY ALGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR SLIMANE
HOFFMAN WHO IS PRINCIPAL GOA OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH ALGERIAN SUP-
PORT FOR POLISARIO. FOLLOWING HIS WEEK AMONG POLISARIO KRAMER BE-
CAME AN EVEN STRONGER PARTISAN OF THEIR CAUSE THAN BEFORE. HE MADE
FOLLOWING POINTS:

2. HE ENTERED VILLAGE OF HAOUZA WITH HIS POLISARIO HOSTS SHORTLY
AFTER ITS "RECAPTURE" BY POLISARIO. HE SAID HAOUZA (ABOUT MIDWAY
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BETWEEN TINDOUF AND EL AYOON AND CLOSE TO SMARA) HAD BEEN THE FIRST
TOWN TAKEN BY MOROCCANS "WHEN THEY INVADED." HIS HOSTS TOLD HIM
THAT MOROCCANS HAD LEFT BARBED-WIRE-RINGED TOWN UNDER FIRE "AND GOT
THEIR ASSES KICKED ON THE WAY OUT." HE CLAIMED TO BE FIRST CAMERAMAN
TO VISIT TOWN FOLLOWING ITS RECENT CAPTURE.

3. KRAMER SPOKE OF SEEING MANY SAHRAOUI ENCAMPMENTS AND SCORES OF

BURNT OUT MOROCCAN VEHICLES. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN AMMUNITION BOXES WITH AID HANDSHAKE SYMBOL AND MARKED "FOR EMERGENCY COMBAT USE ONLY". HE SAID, "ALL SAHRAOUISS ASSUME WE (AMERICANS) ARE SUPPLIERS OF ARMS USED BY THE MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS."

4. KRAMER WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY SAHRAOUISS' STAMINA, KNOWLEDGE OF HOME TERRAIN AND ABILITY TO NAVIGATE DESERT IN LANDROVERS. HIS DRIVER WAS FROM SMARA WHERE HE SAID HE STILL OWNED A SHOP AND A CAR. HIS DRIVER AND OTHERS OBSERVED THAT TOWNSFOLK ALL HAD FAMILY MEMBERS OFF IN DESERT TENDING LIVESTOCK WHERE THEY WOULD GO FOR HOLIDAYS FOR A FEW MONTHS AT A TIME. SAHRAOUISS CAN PUT UP WITH HEAT, WIND AND SAND. MOROCCANS AND ALGERIANS CANNOT, HE MAINTAINED. WHILE MOROCCANS WOULD TAKE HIGH GROUND DURING THEIR SWEEPS, SAHRAOUISS USED WADIS (DRY RIVER BEDS) AS NATURAL TRENCHES. SAHRAOUISS WERE LIKE GNATS, HARRASSING MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN SUPPLY LINES.

5. HE FELT POLISARIO HAD VIRTUAL CONTROL OF TERRAIN AND THEREFORE HAD POLITICAL CONTROL. HE SAW THE WAR CONDUCTED BY POLISARIO AS "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT KIND OF POLITICAL POLL" IN WHICH SAHRAOUISS VOITED WITH THEIR LIVES OUT OF CONVICTION THAT WESTERN SAHARA BELONGED TO THEM.

6. REFERRING TO ALGERIAN COMPLICITY IN POLISARIO EFFORT, HE NOTED THAT WHILE TINDOUF WAS MUCH SMALLER THAN BECHAR IT HAD A FAR LARGER AIRPORT. REGARDING REFUGEE CAMPS, HE SAID SAHRAOUISS LIVE IN THEM JUST AS THEY DID IN THEIR HOME AREAS BUT UNDER MORE CROWDED CONDITIONS.

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DITIONS.

7. COMMENT: LATEST POLISARIO MILITARY COMMUNIQUE SAYS ONLY THAT POLISARIO DESTROYED A GAS DEPOT IN HAOUZA BETWEEN AUGUST 16 AND SEPTEMBER 15, BUT MAKES NO MENTION OF CAPTURE OF VILLAGE. KRAMER'S REPORT IS, THEREFORE, PUZZLING. HAYNES

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